



COVER SHEET

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***Dance Me To My Song* (Rolf de Heer 1997): The Story of a Disabled Dancer.**

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Abstract.

Rolf de Heer's "Dance Me To My Song" (1997) is a film with very little traditional dancing, being the story of a wheelchair-bound young lady who suffers from cerebral palsy. Two years before she died, real-life aphasic star and co-writer, Heather Rose, was the keynote speaker at the Pacific Rim Disability Conference in 2000 at which she said: "I wanted to create a screenplay, but not just another soppy disability film, I wanted to make a hot sexy film, which showed the real world." For Heather and other disabled persons, the real world does not necessarily preclude dancing. Thus, despite her twisted body and drooling visage, Heather's story culminates in a joyous jig of triumph as the indomitable redhead dances in her wheelchair with the able-bodied Eddy, whose sexual affections she has won notwithstanding the best efforts of her emotionally stunted and jealous carer, Madelaine. In contrast to Paul Darke's 1998 conception of the "normality drama" genre of the disabled film, Heather has created a disabled character superior to her able-bodied antagonist. As de Heer has done in other films, he has given a voice to those who might otherwise not be heard: in Heather's case via her electric voice synthesizer. This paper argues that de Heer has found a second voice for Heather via Laban's language of dance, and in doing so has expanded understandings of quality of life for the disabled, as per the social model of disability rather than the medical model of disability. The film reinforces Petra Kupper's notion that a new literacy in dance needs to be learned in which students "understand dance not only as a manipulation of the body in time and space, but also as a manipulation of the concept of 'the body' in its framework of 'normality', 'health', 'wholeness', 'intelligence', 'control' and 'art'." (2000: 128). Furthermore, Heather proves herself superior in the film-making industry by successfully assuming primary credit for the film. The ambivalent status regarding the screen-writing role for "Dance Me To My Song" creates a space in which authorship is contestable, although its other candidate, director de Heer, willingly concedes the credit to Rose, and this paper concludes that not only is Heather Rose the deserving author of this film, the film itself is deserving of a new genre label, that of "disability dance drama".

It can be easily argued that *Dance Me To My Song* (1997)¹ works against frequently voiced opinions that the Australian writer, director and oft-times producer, Rolf de Heer, is a film auteur²: he appears to have attempted to negate any obvious position of primary authorship with this particular feature film, his seventh in an oeuvre of twelve he has directed. Indeed, the opening credits do not mention his name at all. Rather, as the 102 minute movie commences the viewer is informed by the opening credits only that it is a film by Heather Rose, thus emphasizing that the work is her creation. Direct and uncompromising, with its full frontal nudity and unflattering shots of the wheelchair-bound and sometimes drooling Rose - a young lady born with cerebral palsy - the film stands as a courageous self-portrait, which, while it does not come across as patronizing or twee, nevertheless finds the grace, humor and humanity trapped inside Rose's unfortunate body. Only in the closing credits does the audience learn that de Heer has directed. He is also credited, along with Heather Rose and Frederick Stahl, as a co-writer, and along with Giuseppe Pedersoli and Domenico Procacci, as a co-producer. This level of collaboration is not uncommon in film but it is

rare to see primary authorship ceded so apparently unproblematically. The reading permitted by the allocation of authorship to a member of a marginalized population re-invigorates questions posed by Andy Medhurst regarding authorship and the gay community: there is possibly "... more political justification if the project being undertaken is one concerned with the cultural history of a marginalized group."³ Just as films by gay authors about gay characters have greater credibility, one might wonder would a film by a disabled person about a disabled character be better received? Enabling auteurist agency by a mute, female cripple rather than a successful white, educated, heterosexual, middle-class, middle-aged male can be cynically regarded as good (show)business in that it is politically justifiable, hence this article asks if the appellation "A film by Heather Rose" is deserved in *Dance Me To My Song*. The question is also posed if, due to Rose's writing of a character that proves herself superior to an able-bodied love rival, this film should be bound to Paul Darke's 1988 conception of the "normality drama" genre of the disabled film⁴ or Albert Moran and Errol Vieth's "women's melodrama" genre.⁵

Heather Rose (real name Heather Slattery) plays Julia, who like the actor/writer herself has cerebral palsy: a group of non-progressive, chronic disorders resulting from changes produced in the brain during the prenatal stages of life. The most common characteristics of this medical condition are disorders of posture, movement and equilibrium. Seizures and mental retardation are frequent but not always present. Although severely affected physically, Rose suffered no intellectual impairment and had appeared in a small role in Rolf de Heer's cult hit *Bad Boy Bubby* five years before, an experience that grew into an ongoing fascination with the filmmaking process. Subsequently, working with part-time writer Frederick Stahl, she came up with the scenario for this film, writing the leading role for herself and then proactively bringing it to de Heer's attention. The Vertigo Productions website has the following comment by Rose about de Heer's deliberate lack of involvement in the script-writing process:

One night I had a birthday party to which I invited Rolf. Fred and I talked about the script to Rolf, but Rolf didn't even want to read what we'd done so far, saying he didn't want to interfere with our process. A while later Rolf called Fred at my place and asked him to come into the office. I had no idea what this could have been about. When Fred got back he told me Rolf wanted to help us develop the script further. This gave me a big boost in confidence, because it meant that someone really believed in me, in my ability to do something worthwhile, something that would benefit other people.⁶

Sadly, Heather Rose died on October 5th, 2002, aged just 36, and Frederick Stahl reports in her obituary an excerpt from her diary about her attitude to the script-writing process:

People see me as a person who has to be controlled. But let me tell you something, people. I am not! And I am going to make something real special of my life! I am going to go out there and grab life with both hands!!! I am going to make the most sexy and honest film about disability that has ever been made!!⁷

At the 2000 ISAAC (International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication) Awards, in her presentation lecture, Rose gave further insights into the writing process for *Dance Me To My Song*:

I wanted to create a screenplay, but not just another soppy disability film, I wanted to make a hot sexy film, which showed the real world. [...] I provided most of the ideas, whilst Fred typed them into the computer. Some of the ideas came from my own life experiences, some from the experiences of other people I have known, and some from my imagination. The message I wanted to convey to an audience was "As people with disabilities, we have the same feelings and desires as others". [...] The screenplay took two years to finish and was very hard work. Fred had chronic fatigue syndrome, which limited the amount of work he could do. On top of that, I had creative days when the ideas flowed and frustrating days

when my thoughts just dried up. I stayed motivated because I had it in the back of my mind that one day I would like to work again with Rolf de Heer. It took persistence for this dream to be realised. Rolf was not sure about committing to the movie; I had to pester him really. I decided to invite him to my birthday party. It took a few drinks, but I got him to agree to be the director of “Dance Me To My Song”.⁸

Of the writer who got him tipsy so he would agree to back her script, de Heer, also on the Vertigo Productions website, states:

It is impossible to overstate the courage of the performance that you see on the screen. Supported as she was so selflessly by Joey [Kennedy], John [Brumpton] and Rena [Owen], Heather somehow found the means to respond on cue, to maintain the concentration, to move in the desired direction, all the myriad of acting fundamentals that we take for granted as normal things to do in our normal lives. More than any film I’ve made, this is a film that serves the actors. The actors, Heather foremost among them, serve the film exceptionally well.⁹

With regard to the issue of an actor playing a disabled character, this film recalls Gil Brearley’s 1984 drama *Annie’s Coming Out* (also known as *A Test Of Love*), in which the main character, Annie, is also played by an actor with cerebral palsy, Tina Arondhis. But unlike that compelling drama, there is a temptation to describe *Dance Me To My Song* as an autobiographical documentary, since it is Rose herself, with her unique personality and obvious physical handicap, playing the film’s heroine, Julia. In interview with Andrew L. Urban in 1998, however, De Heer apparently disagrees with this interpretation:

Rolf de Heer is quick to point out, though, that the film is not a biography. ‘Not at all; only in the sense that writers use material from their own lives. Madelaine is merely the collection of the worst qualities of the worst carers Heather’s ever had.’ *Dance Me to My Song* could be seen as a dramatised documentary, since it is Rose herself playing Julia, and her physical or surface life is so intense and she is so obviously handicapped. While he understands that response, de Heer draws a comparison with the first films that used black actors instead of white actors in blackface. ‘I don’t know how it felt emotionally to an audience, I wasn’t there, but I think that is the equivalent.’¹⁰

An example of an actor wearing ‘black-face’ to portray a cerebral palsy victim might be Gus Trikonis’ 1980 film *Touched By Love*. In this, the disabled girl is unconvincingly played by the pretty actress Diane Lane: the true nature of the character’s medical condition is hidden and, indeed, cosmeticized to Hollywood expectations. Compared to that unconvincing film, Rose’s performance in *Dance Me To My Song* is unmediated reality.

Despite his generous credit-giving, de Heer’s direction of this remarkable film is certainly detectable. His auteur signature is especially visible regarding his employment of sound. The first distinctly de Heer influence is the use of a binaural recording device similar to that used in *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993) to fully convey to the audience the labored nature of Julia’s breathing. This apparatus provides a disturbing sound bed of noise that is part wheezing, part grunting. There is no escaping Julia’s physically unusual life, from her reliance on others for food, toilet, showering, to the half-strangled sounds emanating from her ineffectual larynx. But like Stephen Hawking, Julia does speak, via her *Epson RealVoice* computerized voice synthesizer, and Julia manages to retain her dignity. She plays her voice synthesizer almost like a musical instrument, its neatly modulated feminine tones prompting empathy when she repeatedly utters “Not yet, please”.

Rose Capp notes de Heer’s preoccupation with finding a voice for those minority groups within the population who struggle to be heard, stating:

De Heer has been equally consistent in exploring the communicative difficulties underpinning troubled relationships. From the mute young protagonist of *The Quiet Room* to the aphasic heroine of *Dance Me to My Song*, De Heer's films are frequently preoccupied with the profound inadequacy or outright failure of language as a means of communication.¹¹

The importance to Julia of her only means of communication, her voice synthesizer, is stressed throughout the film. Everybody around her has, to varying degrees, problems in hearing correctly or understanding both what and how Julia communicates with her alien mode of conversing and she is frequently asked to repeat herself. Even the well-meaning Eddie (John Brumpton) says: "I don't know what the machine is trying to say". But it is ultimately via her voice synthesizer that Julia expresses her indomitable character. When first she meets Eddie, she types: "Please put my voice machine on my chair, STUPID." She proudly declares ownership of a condom found in the bathroom with "It's mine!" The callous Madelaine (Joey Kennedy) soon realizes Julia's strength is in her voice machine and withholds access to the device as punishment: if she takes it away then Julia is less demanding for the self-centered carer. Indeed, the film which starts off portraying the superiority of Madelaine soon shows us that the carer's life, for all her able-bodied, free-love ways, is far more miserable than Julia's. Within the first few minutes of the film we see Madelaine dissatisfied as she inspects her healthy, toned and naked body in the bathroom mirror, contrasted with Julia's twisted form, prostrate, pale and naked on the bed. Yet, in due course, it is the able-bodied girl who is shown to be insecure and lacking in character. Madelaine steals Julia's money and insensitively calls her "spastic". Madelaine positions Julia in her wheelchair to force her to watch as she has perfunctory sex with her biker boyfriend. Madelaine even masquerades as Julia, commandeering her voice synthesizer to give a fraudulently positive account of her work performance to the employment agency she works for. Foul-mouthed and short-tempered, Madelaine performs her tasks with petulance and often gets angry with her hapless patient. The juxtaposition of the two different personalities stems from the internal nature of Madelaine's problems compared to the external nature of Julia's problems. Madelaine has an emotional disability rather than a physical disability: several scenes in the film show her reduced to helpless tears. Then, one day when Madelaine has left her to her own devices, Julia defiantly wheels herself outside and bumps into, almost literally, handsome able-bodied Eddie. Cheerfully determined, Julia wins him over and a lasting friendship is formed. But having seen the joy sex brings to Madelaine, Julia too wants carnal fulfillment: she telephones Eddie and arranges a date. When Eddie arrives, he reads the text on the computer screen containing the title line to the movie 'Dance me to my song' and they share a tender moment. Eddie's gentleness as he dances Julia to her song ("Kizugu" written by Bernard Huber and John Laidler, as performed by Okapi Guitars) is simultaneously contrasted with the near date rape Madelaine endures with the latest in her line of low-life boyfriends. Madelaine's inability to communicate is further demonstrated by her failure to stop her new boyfriend from forcing himself on her. Such is the attraction of Eddie, this sensitive yet hunky male friend of Julia's, that Madelaine soon seduces him. But this only strengthens Julia's resolve, and she, too, eventually seduces the man. Madelaine catches them in the act and throws Eddie out. Indeed, the conflict between Madeline and Julia prompts Moran and Vieth to categorize the film as melodrama or women's film:

At first sight it might seem somewhat unusual to treat *Dance Me To My Song* under the category of romance. After all, the central figure of Julia (Heather Ross [sic]) is a young woman who is inside a twisted body severely affected by cerebral palsy. As such, the film might seem to be social realist in the tradition of *Annie's Coming Out* (1984), with its emphasis on the need for society to recognize the severely disabled as people who have an equal right to live normal lives in the community rather than being shut away in institutions. In fact, *Dance Me To My Song* is another kind of film entirely, so despite the possibility of understanding it in terms of social realism, it is equally pertinent to recognize it as a women's film. Within that broad type, one can understand *Dance Me To My Song* as a

magical tale of cruelty, romance and love ... *Dance Me To My Song* clearly belongs to the genre of the romance. However, it is also important to recognize it under the mantle of the women's melodrama ... because it has to do with a woman's feelings and suffering, not so much because of the flow of circumstance but rather because of the wickedness and malevolence of another woman who is her enemy and rival.¹²

Madelaine often talks at Julia, as if she has little or no ability to understand or as if she were talking to a mirror. Associated with the issue of Julia's unfamiliar mode of communication is the tendency of better communicating people to 'talk down' or 'at' her, rather than 'to' her. Madelaine states: "I know I'm good looking, good in bed ... better off than you, you poor thing" in a stream-of-consciousness delivery in which Julia is denoted as 'listener' rather than 'converser'. She is reduced to the status of sub-human as Madelaine says: "I wish you could eat like a normal person instead of a bloody animal" and her boyfriend Trevor says: "She looks like a fuckin' insect." Even the benevolent Eddie says: "I don't like leaving you alone but I guess you're used to it." To this the defiant Julia replies; "Please don't talk about me in front of me like I'm an animal or not there at all." When Eddie treats her to an over-priced ice-cream the shop assistant says "Poor little thing ... She'll enjoy this, won't she?" Julia smiles, types the words "Fuck me!", and promptly drops the ice-cream on the floor. "I'll just get her another one," says the flustered shop assistant, "and then get her out of here, please!" With striking eloquence, Julia wheels herself out of the shop, her voice machine announcing "Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me, fuck me, fuck me", as she departs exultantly.

As de Heer has done in many of his other films, a voice has been given to those who might otherwise not be heard: in Heather's case, most obviously via her electric voice synthesizer. But I would suggest de Heer has helped find a second voice for Heather via Laban's language of dance, and in doing so has expanded audience's understandings of quality of life for the disabled, as per the social model of disability rather than the medical model of disability. Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) developed an approach to analyzing movement that recognizes it as a person's first language. He created a symbolic medium whilst simultaneously standardizing the terminology of dance effort into four categories: weight, space, time and flow.¹³ Empowered by her act of courage with Eddie, Julia sacks her uncaring carer and the film ends optimistically with Julia and her new man dancing on the front porch. This happy ending is inter-cut with a shot of Madeline and her broken down car: she is performing her own frustrated dance and this further emphasizes that she was unable to dance (i.e. communicate) with Julia. De Heer acknowledges the Laban sense of dance by showing Heather, merrily rocking back and forth, dancing unproblematically in her wheelchair with Eddie in this final scene. By picturing the dancing couple in long shot and from above, Julia's joyous dance of triumph is depicted as ordinary, normal and not deserving of close examination. The disabled performer such as Rose, whether deliberately appropriating a role or passively accepting it, usually struggles to placate two contrasting realities: (s)he is at once invisible in the public world of inter-human relations and simultaneously hyper-visible due to physical 'otherness' and subsequent instantaneous typecasting. With medical innovation and scientific progress, the disabilities which were once familiar, mundane, and near ubiquitous in the community, are now extraordinary and we passersby function all too willingly as spectators. The modern success in forestalling mortality and its usual predecessor of physical infirmity has made physical vulnerability and corporeal incompleteness novel, despite the fact that many of the present-day gawkers will themselves be infirm eventually due to old age. But by the end of *Dance Me To My Song*, Rose and de Heer have subverted this notion of the disabled performer grappling with the dual roles of invisible victim and hyper-visible victim by depicting Julia as socially and physically adept. She wins the guy and dances her victory as de Heer's inspirational camera looks down at her success like an omniscient and pleased God. Film academic Vivian Sobchack writes of the phenomenology of dance choreography for the disabled and her own experience of waltzing with the maker of her prosthetic leg, Steve, with the comment, "for the moment I did displace focus on my bodily immanence to the

transcendent ensemble of our movement and I really began to waltz”.¹⁴ It is easy to imagine Rose’s own, similar feeling of bodily transcendence in the closing shot of *Dance Me To My Song*.

De Heer is not the first to address the seemingly uncooperative worlds of physical disability and dance. Numerous films portray dance as performed by some very talented and disabled people: Karina Epperlein’s *Phoenix Dance* (2006), John Killacky’s *Dreaming Awake* (2003) and *Crip Shots* (2001), Victoria Marks’ *Outside In* (1993) and Darshan Singh Bhuller’s *The Fall* (1991) spring to mind. Carrie Sandahl writes of the metaphor the disabled dancer creates, a metaphor in which the imbalance between the two dancing represents a relationship based on mutual concern, not a need to dominate the other, such as Madelaine endures from her demeaning lovers and attempts to inflict on Julia in *Dance Me To My Song*. Sandahl states:

Dancers in wheelchairs or on crutches, for instance, challenge what it means to be bodies moving through space. As they dance with each other or with the non-disabled, these disabled bodies disrupt traditional representations of relationships: their sharing of balance is asymmetrical, suggesting interdependence based on accommodation rather than dominance or virtuosity.¹⁵

As mainstream as such films depicting disabled dancers have become, Rose and de Heer are the first to my knowledge to combine the notion of a disabled girl dancing and a romantic plot-line in which that disabled girl wins a handsome, able-bodied boy. With this rewriting of the typical narrative of the disabled dancer, Rose and de Heer reinforce Petra Kupper’s notion that a new literacy in dance needs to be learned in which students “understand dance not only as a manipulation of the body in time and space, but also as a manipulation of the concept of ‘the body’ in its framework of ‘normality’, ‘health’, ‘wholeness’, ‘intelligence’, ‘control’ and ‘art’.”¹⁶ Most importantly, Rose shows she can ‘dance’ better than her able-bodied rival, Madelaine: she communicates more effectively, asserts herself more successfully and wins their competition for the love of Eddie. This serves as a rare exception to the films featuring the disabled, which, according to Paul Darke, typically involve the disabled protagonist struggling to triumph over the limitations imposed by their disability in their admirable attempts to normalize. Such normality dramas are usually characterized by two generic themes:

... first, that the state of abnormality is nothing other than tragic because of its medical implications; and, second, that the struggle for normality, or some semblance of it in normalization – as represented in the film by the other characters – is unquestionably right owing to its axiomatic supremacy.¹⁷

Darke argues that the normality drama is “... unambiguously a negation of ascribing any real social or individual value to the impaired or abnormal”¹⁸, functioning to reinforce the audience’s self-image of normality and the disabled as the inferior Other. Non-disabled characters are typically portrayed positively in the normality drama: “A normality as represented in the decency and support of those characters who exist around, and for, the impaired central character. Thus many of the disabled characters in such narratives are bitter, frustrated and unfulfilled and either antisocial or asocial.”¹⁹ Darke duly identifies *The Elephant Man* (David Lynch 1980) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (Oliver Stone 1989) as archetypal films of this genre. Even films in which apparently positive images of the disabled are featured the protagonist is still to be regarded as the abnormal Other, because:

... in comparison to the other characters within that narrative the impaired character is still a comparatively second-class citizen in the world of the film. *My Left Foot* is, as always, a prime example: Christy Brown may well be a writer, relatively wealthy and happy, but he is not seen as sexual in any way ...²⁰

But *Dance Me To My Song* defies any such generic themes. Rose’s temperament is upbeat and

cheerful and her disability, rather than appearing tragic, is made to look like a strong point upon comparison with the physically attractive, able-bodied but deeply unhappy Madelaine. The usual medical-model nexus is also ignored: no medication, no hospitals and no white coats are to be seen in Rose's world. And Rose is unashamedly sexual. Audience's expectations of yet another film of the normality drama genre are subverted as the disabled protagonist proves superior to her 'normal' adversary in their battle for the sexual favors of the handsome Eddie.

Rolf de Heer was a fairly well-known film-maker by the time he directed *Dance Me To My Song*: his films *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993) and *The Quiet Room* (1996) had both screened at Cannes. He was rapidly developing a reputation for non-mainstream representations of marginalized, subaltern populations, a trajectory that was to be further consolidated by later films privileging the voice of indigenous peoples in his aboriginal films *The Tracker* (2002) and *Ten Canoes* (2006). With a nascent politically correct worldview proving popular, he may have considered the assigning of authorship to Rose a marketable idea, her being representative of a marginalized group, which as Andy Medhurst might argue, may be more politically justifiable, as it is with films of gay authorship. However, it must be emphasized that there is no evidence de Heer's reticence about authorship of *Dance Me To My Song* is motivated by pecuniary interests, nor does he seem to have been trying to distance himself from the project through embarrassment or dissatisfaction with the film. Rather, he seems to be giving credit for authorship where he sincerely believes credit is due, for as a result of Rose's creativity and tenacity this film is, in two ways, an exception to the disability film genre defined by Paul Darke as the "normality drama".²¹ Firstly, in the film's diegesis, Rose is shown triumphing not simply over the limitations of her disability, but over her able-bodied rival in love as well: she 'dances' better than the 'normal' Madelaine. Secondly, in her gaining possession of the primary credits, and the mantle of the film's author, Rose is shown triumphing over other aspiring able-bodied film-makers in the notoriously competitive film-making industry. The label "A film by Heather Rose" is a deserved coup for the girl who set out to make "the most sexy and honest film about disability ever made".²² A decade after its release this little-known film by and about a remarkable woman warrants re-examination and even, were there more films of its status, the invention of a new genre label in its honor: a label that reflects the film's dual empowerment of the disabled. Perhaps, rather than binding to the genre labels of Moran and Veith's "women's melodrama"²³ or Darke's "normality drama"²⁴, Heather Rose and Rolf de Heer's *Dance Me To My Song* should be considered an example of a new genre entitled "disability dance drama".

Notes.

1. *Dance Me To My Song* received funding from two major Australian funding bodies, the AFC and SAFC and was awarded the 1998 Australian Catholic Film Award and the N.S.W. Premier's Literary Award Script Writing Prize. Heather Rose was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the Semana International de Cine de Valladolid in Spain in 1998. The film was screened in numerous film festivals around the world but did not secure major box office sales. The Pacific Rim Disability Conference was convened by the University of Hawaii in 2000 to discuss the issues that arose in her film. Heather was the keynote speaker and won the communication award at this series of seminars which was entitled the 'Dance Me to My Song Conference'.
2. David Stratton writes: "Aussie auteur Rolf de Heer has established himself as an uncompromising film-maker" (David Stratton, "The Quiet Room, Variety Review," *Vertigo Productions* (18 May 1996 [accessed 28 March 2007])). Available from http://www.vertigoproductions.com.au/information.php?film_id=4&display=reviews); Ali Sharp states definitively: "de Heer's presence is a victory for auteurism" (Ali Sharp, "The old man and the jungle," *Metro* 140 (2004): 34), and Jake Wilson declares: "Rolf de Heer is one of the very few auteurs who regularly succeeds in getting features financed in Australia" (Jake Wilson, "Looking both ways: 'The Tracker'," *Senses of Cinema* (January 2003 [accessed 28 March 2007])). Available from <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/24/tracker.html>).
3. Andy Medhurst, "That special thrill: *Brief Encounter*, homosexuality and authorship," *Screen* 32.2 (1991): 203.
4. Paul Darke, "Cinematic representations of disability," in *The Disability Reader*, Tom Shakespeare, ed. (London and New York: Cassell, 1988), 181.
5. Albert Moran and Errol Veith, *Film in Australia: An Introduction* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 198-9.
6. Rolf De Heer, "Production Notes," *Vertigo Productions*, (undated [accessed 26 March 2007])). Available from http://www.vertigoproductions.com.au/information.php?film_id=10&display=notes
7. Frederick Stahl, "Standing room only for a thunderbolt in a wheelchair," *Sydney Morning Herald* (31 October 2002 [accessed 3 October 2006])). Available from <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/10/30/1035683471529.html>
8. Heather Rose Slattery, "ISAAC 2000 Conference Presentation," *Words+* (undated [accessed 26 March 2007])). Available from <http://www.words-plus.com/website/stories/isaac2000.htm>
9. De Heer, "Production Notes".
10. Andrew L. Urban, "Dance me to my song, Rolf de Heer, Australia," *Film Festivals*, (1988 [accessed 26 March 2007])). Available from <http://www.filmfestivals.com/cannes98/selofus9.htm>

11. Rose Capp, "Alexandra and the de Heer project," *RealTime*, (undated [accessed 26 March 2007]). Available from http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:INZh8cIOEN8J:www.realttimearts.net/rt56/capp.html+rose+capp+alexandra&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=au&lr=lang_en
12. Moran and Veith, 198-9.
13. Rudolf Laban, *Modern Educational Dance*, 2nd ed., rev. Lisa Ullmann, (London: MacDonald and Evans, 1963), 8.
14. Vivian Sobchack, "'Choreography for One, Two, and Three Legs' (A Phenomenological Meditation in Movements)," *Topoi* 24(2005): 65.
15. Carrie Sandahl, "Ahhhh freak out! Metaphors of disability and femaleness in performance," *Theatre Topics* 9.1 (1999): 27-8.
16. Petra Kuppers, "Accessible education: aesthetics, bodies and disability," *Research in Dance Education* 1.2 (2000): 119-131.
17. Darke, 187.
18. Darke, 196.
19. Darke, 193.
20. Darke, 194.
21. Darke, 181.
22. Stahl, 2002.
23. Moran and Veith, 199.
24. Darke, 181.